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February 18, 2005

The Honorable Michael Castle
The Honorable Diana DeGette
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Castle and DeGette:

The Steven and Michele Kirsch Foundation strongly supports your legislation, HR 810, "The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act," which would expand federal support for human stem cell research. Since 2001, the Kirsch Foundation has been actively working – as a member of the Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research – to protect scientists' ability to conduct embryonic stem cell research.

More than three years have passed since President Bush articulated the current federal policy in this area in a nationally televised statement in August 2001. Since that time, we have learned much more about the potential of research on human stem cells to open vistas of scientific research for future therapies and cures that could save millions of lives at risk today from diseases and medical conditions including Alzheimer's disease, cancer, juvenile diabetes, Parkinson's, traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injuries.

We have also learned that the limitations placed by the existing federal policy are consigning U.S. medical research to the sidelines even as other nations are hurrying to develop this field. As you know, American scientists report that it is increasingly difficult to not only attract new scientists but also to retain current scientist to stem cell research out of concern that federal restrictions will keep this crucial research from being successful.

Your legislation would allow broader federal funding for stem cell research within approved ethical guidelines, while ensuring no federal funding is used to derive stem cells or destroy embryos. The Kirsch Foundation applauds your continuing leadership to preserve the promise of medical research for all Americans.

Sincerely,



Susan E. Frank
Vice President, Public Policy

Board of Directors

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